SPIRITUAL GROWTH THRU MORAL LIVING.

Our text that scripture passage assigned to me for my Greek thesis before.Presbytery. II Peter 1:1-11.

I. The theological doctrine of Salvation by Faith does not give to Morality that degree of importance accorded it in the N.T.

1.The Catholic Church ingeniously transferrs faith in God thru Christ to faith in the church, in its infallable pope, in the efficacy of its sacraments, ceremonial offerings, penances and purchased absolutions. It attempts to relieve the sinner from the burden of his personal responsibility and moral accountability.

2.Some protestants who consider themselves orthodox regard the practice of morality as but a consequence of one's faith in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" is all that is required: God does all the rest.

3. Other protestants add "Works" to "Faith". They believe that salvation can only be obtained by a faith that works out the righteousnefs of God in personal living. Nevertheless, it is the faith that does the work. The work of regeneration is the work of God alone; not by any works that man can do does man find his salvation.

4. The N.T.

a. X in the sermon on Mount, deals primarily with morality. His kingdom a kingdom of righteousness, of right living. X's summary of the law- love to God and man. Love as exemplified in keeping the commandments.

X in Jn.7:17 If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself. Doing the will of God can only be done by practicing the moral virtues.

James, the bro. of Jesus: Even so faith if it have not works is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, "Thou hast faith and I have works. Show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by

my works will show thee my faith&

1 Jn.2:3 And heheby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Paul:Work out your own salvation for it is God that worketh in you.

Peter in the text.

II.NATURE'S CONSTRUCTIVE PRINCIPLE OF GROWTH.

1.At work in the mineral kingdom. It holds the particles of mineral together. It determines the reactions in all chemica experiments. Without it, matter would disintegrate and fall into a chaos.

2.In the vegetable kingdom. The seed germinates; it takes on matter, converting it into cells, the cells are aggregated in into masses which we call plants, trees, flowers, fruits and vegetables. Earth, air and water are made to flow into the tree or plant, thus life, health, development and growth are maintained.

3.In the animal kingdom the same principle is at work, only on a more extensive scale. A single mucleated cell expands, multiplies and combines with others of its kind to form definite organs. After the body is thus formed and becomes a living animal, its health and growth are maintained by continuing to assimilate matter by selecting just what it needs for the making of all its tissues anew constantly.

The physical human being develops and grows in accordance with the same law.

4.But the same law governs the whole of life, the mental, moral and spiritual life of man as well as all physical life. The only difference being that the law is involuntarily enforced on the physical planes, but on the higher planes man has the power to apply it or not just as he chooses. A man does not have to develop his mind-he can choose to remain ignorant. A man does not have to develop his moral nature- he can choose to remain animal-like and lustful, selfish and cruel. A man does not have to develop his spiritual nature, he can choose to remain ignorant of God and the higher life.

But should a man choose to become a morally functioning being, he can only do so by practicing ~~the~~ nature's principle of constructive growth. By the same process of selection and assim ipation the moral life is built up and maintained. Likewise the mental and spiritual life. And likewise, this same law governs and controls the great Social Order of mankind.

GOD WORKS FROM WITHIN. THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU&

11. Nature's constructive principle of growth works from within each organism. Each life must do its own functioning.

The chick confined within the egg. It can be gotten out in two ways, we can break the shell and let it out, or we can let the chick break its own shell and come out of its own accord. But nature has ordained that the chick must break its own shell if it would life.

And as there comes to the chick an intuitive sense of a larger world without, prompting it to break the shell just at the right time, so there ~~is/is/is/is~~ comes to man, under favorable conditions

the consciousness of a higher plane of living for him, a spirit world which he desires to enter. Man, by his own individual effort, working from within, must break thru his shell of physical materiality and enter the spiritual realm. God provides all the means and the necessary materials for man's higher life, but man, of his own free will and accord, must utilize them for his advancement.

III. What are the means for man's spiritual advancement? By what means can man select and make part of himself the substance necessary for his spiritual construction and growth?

By the selection and practice of those moral principles of right liveing which purifies his heart and makes him to see God. The beginning point of Xn living is the study and practice of Morality. Love to God and and knowledge of things divine are kindled and won by doing the will of God, by keeping His commandments, by doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us; by adding to our faith virtue and self-control.

Morality is a science whose principles can be studied and applied to conduct until man can master himself. Only the self- mastered man can enter the kingdom of God.

Morality is the basis of spiritual growth and attainment. Jesus words, "Whosoever heareth these words of mine and doeth them - words which set forth the moral principles of right living.

CONC. Man is morally responsible and individually accountable for his state of being in the realm of intellect, character and soul. He must exercise his god-given powers if he would rise above the earthly and physical and enter into the realm of mind and spirit.

Religion is not a theology of dogmatic belief, but a science of right living whose principles must be mastered and applied to conduct for the building of the human soul into a temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

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